

Mori language

In its broad sense, **Mori** is a cover term used to refer collectively to two languages of Central Sulawesi: Mori Bawah and Mori Atas. Sometimes a third language, Padoe, is also included.

History of the term

Originally the term 'Mori' referred only to certain clans living on the upper course of the Laa River in Central Sulawesi, that is, today's Mori Atas or 'Upper Mori' people. After the imposition of Dutch colonial rule in the early twentieth century, the name was extended to include peoples living eastward along the lower course of the Laa and in the Tambalako watershed (today's Mori Bawah or 'Lower Mori'), and southward to peoples around Lake Matano (including the Padoe). Although the languages of these areas were different, the people shared a similar culture, and at that time had also been united under the powerful ruler Marundu.

In the present day, the situation has been reversed. Today 'Mori' in its narrow sense refers principally to the Mori Bawah language, and even more specifically to the Tinompo dialect thereof, which colonial authorities promoted as a standard throughout the area.^[2]

Classification and convergence

Using the historical-comparative method of linguistics, Mead has demonstrated that there is an ancient language divide running through the Mori area.^[3] Mori Atas and Padoe are more closely related to the Tolaki language than they are to Mori Bawah, while Mori Bawah shares its closest linguistic affinities with Bungku and other languages of the eastern seaboard of Sulawesi, such as Wawonii and Kulisusu. These old associations are clear from patterns of shared sound change, and they are also apparent in pronoun sets.

For example, the following table lists the independent pronouns in five languages.^[4] From this table it can be seen that Mori Bawah independent pronouns closely resemble those of Bungku, while Mori Atas and Padoe pronouns are closer to those of Tolaki.

Mori	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Sulawesi
Native speakers	(33,000 cited 1988–1991) ^[1]
Language family	Austronesian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malayo-Polynesian ▪ Celebic ▪ Bungku-Tolaki ▪ Mori
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: mzq – Mori Atas xmz – Mori Bawah pdo – Padoe
Glottolog	<i>None</i>

	Tolaki	Padoe	Mori Atas	Mori Bawah	Bungku
1s	<i>inaku</i>	<i>iaku</i>	<i>iaku</i>	<i>ongkue</i>	<i>ngkude</i>
2s	<i>inggo'o</i>	<i>iiko</i>	<i>iiko</i>	<i>omue</i>	<i>munde</i>
3s	<i>ie'i</i>	<i>umono</i>	<i>iwono</i>	<i>onae</i>	<i>nade</i>
1p excl	<i>inggami</i>	<i>ikami</i>	<i>ikami</i>	<i>omami</i>	<i>mami</i>
1p incl	<i>inggito</i>	<i>ikito</i>	<i>ikito</i>	<i>ontae</i>	<i>ntade</i>
2p	<i>inggomiu</i>	<i>ikomiu</i>	<i>ikomiu</i>	<i>omi</i>	<i>miu</i>
3p	<i>ihiro</i>	<i>umboro</i>	<i>iworo</i>	<i>ondae</i>	<i>ndade</i>

In light of such differences, it is improbable that the Mori Atas and Mori Bawah languages are inherently intelligible. However, because of cultural ties, commerce, and intermingling of their populations through local immigration, Mori Atas and Mori Bawah people are at least familiar with each other's languages, and the languages have been converging in terms of their wordstocks, as can be seen in relatively high percentages of shared lexical similarity.^[5]

References

1. Mori Atas (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mzq/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Mori Bawah (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/xmzl/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Padoe (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/pdo/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
 2. Esser, S. J. *Phonology and Morphology of Mori* (<http://www.sil.org/silepubs/abstract.asp?id=928474543176>), translated from the Dutch version of 1927–1933 (Dallas: SIL, 2011), pp. 2 ff.
 3. Mead, David. Proto-Bungku-Tolaki: Reconstruction of its phonology and aspects of its morphosyntax. (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 1998) p. 117
 4. Mead, David. Proto-Bungku-Tolaki: Reconstruction of its phonology and aspects of its morphosyntax. (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 1998) p. 145
 5. Mead, David. *The Bungku Tolaki Languages of South-eastern Sulawesi, Indonesia* (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 1999), pp. 35, 53.
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